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February 22, 2024

The Honorable C. T. Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 258: Renewable Energy – Customer-Sited Solar Program
FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee,

I am the Corporate VP of Trinity Solar and the Chair of the Maryland Rooftop Solar Coalition. I have 24 years of experience in the rooftop solar industry and was responsible for opening Trinity Solar's Maryland office in 2015.

Our industry is struggling to reach Maryland's solar clean energy goals. We dropped from a high of 20,000 installs in 2015 to around 5,700 in 2022. The number of installs continues to decrease each year as the economics erode, specifically because the solar renewable energy credits are capped in value and not trading at a price to incentivize rooftop solar adoption and because there are not incentives available to all communities.

The primary driver for our difficulties is the solar economics. In my experience, a homeowner needs a 7-year payback to encourage them to go solar. The current incentives put the payback at around 12 years. As a result, it is difficult for us to offer homeowners savings on their electric bill. This bill changes that paradigm by recirculating the funds paid by utilities who have not met their renewable portfolio standards back to solar projects. In doing so, we fulfill the legislative intent of why penalties are paid in the first place and ensure those funds are directed toward meeting the RPS goals established under the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2019 (CEJA).

Lastly, this bill also ensures that a percentage of the funds are dedicated to the low- and moderate-income, overburdened, and underserved (LMIOU) communities and also allows the grant to be used for Power Purchase Agreements and Solar Leases, not just loans. Having a broad variety of financing alternatives is critical to ensuring solar is financially accessible to all homeowners. Solar is not just for the wealthier residents that can afford to choose a renewable energy source. Solar is for everyone and with accessible resources and a strong customer-sited program, we can deploy systems immediately to assist Maryland in meeting their climate goals.

Thank you, Delegate Lily Qi, for introducing this legislation and we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 258.

Very truly yours,

Ed Merrick
Corporate Vice President, Trinity Solar

cc: Rick Abbruzzese